

# Wheaton, Maryland

## *Options for Redevelopment*

***Generated from a Quality Community Survey***

***Envisioning Wheaton's Future***

Sponsored by:  
Mass Transit Administration

A. Nelessen Associates, Visioning, Planning and Urban Design    Princeton, NJ  
[www.nelessen.org](http://www.nelessen.org)

**This report is about the inevitable redevelopment of Wheaton Center. It provides images of what the community feels is appropriate in inappropriate development options for the future.**

**The recommendations generate from the results of the Visual Preference Survey, the Community Demographic, Policy and Market Questionnaire combined with the results of the workshop, provide the framework for the redevelopment plan for the Wheaton Center.**



**Welcome to Wheaton**

**A VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY (VPS), QUESTIONNAIRE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP WAS PREPARED TO DEVELOP OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE AREA AND REINFORCE THE REDEVELOPMENT PLANS THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY PREPARED. THE QUALITY COMMUNITY SURVEY AND WORKSHOP PROVIDED INVALUABLE INPUT FROM THE COMMUNITY.**

**THIS REPORT CONTAIN THE RESULTS OF THE VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY, THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE SYNTHESIS OF THE WORKSHOP.**

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M

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OF HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND

***“THIS VISIONING PROCESS HELPS  
GOVERNMENT MAKE THE HARD  
DECISIONS ABOUT THE MOST  
DESIRABLE FUTURE.”***

GORDON LYNTON: FORMER MASS TRANSIT ADMINISTRATOR  
FOR FDOT

***“THIS IS A PROCESS BY WHICH PEOPLE  
BECOME THE PLANNERS AND  
ARCHITECTS OF THEIR FUTURE.”***



*Where there is no vision people perish.*

PROVERBS

*Plans succeed when counselors are many and fail when counselors are few.*

PROVERBS

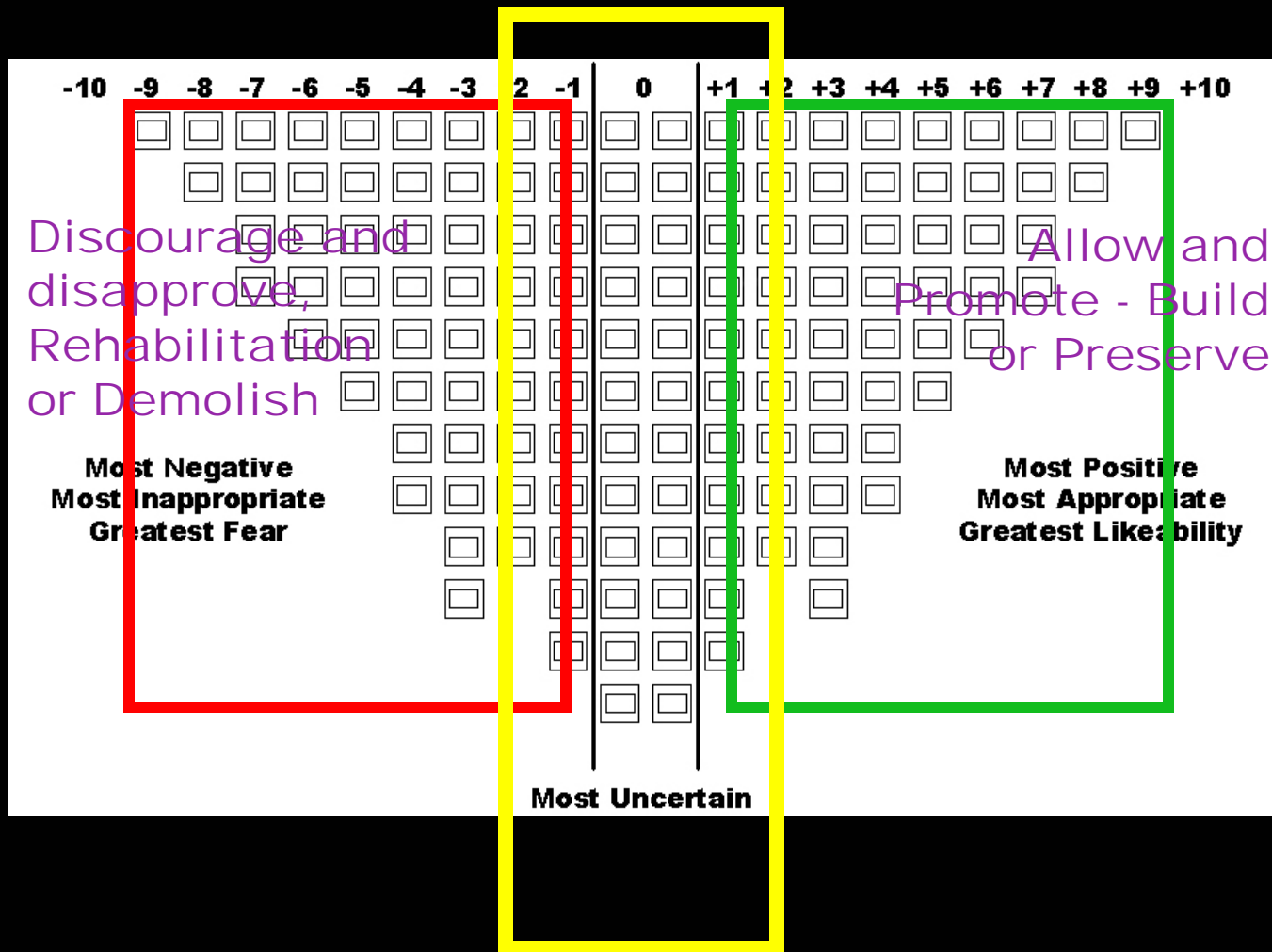
Responses to the 112 images in the survey were based on the community response to the question:

*“What type of buildings, streets and open space are appropriate for the Wheaton area now and in the future?”*

**Range of value responses to the images**

**-10      to      +10**

The average value of the images suggest the following actions:



# Response to Images

## **-2 to -10**

**Remove from Master Plans**

**Eliminate from codes**

**Has the greatest value potential**

**Contributes to depression and hopelessness**

**Partially blames the political process for condition**

## **-1 to +1**

**Greatest temptation**

**Do not recommend for codes**

**Generates the minimum value**

**Contributes to apathy**

## **+2 to +10**

**Incorporate into Master Plans**

**Incorporate into codes**

**Generates the greatest value**

**Contributes to greatest satisfaction**

**Makes people more positive**

# How to Read the Results:

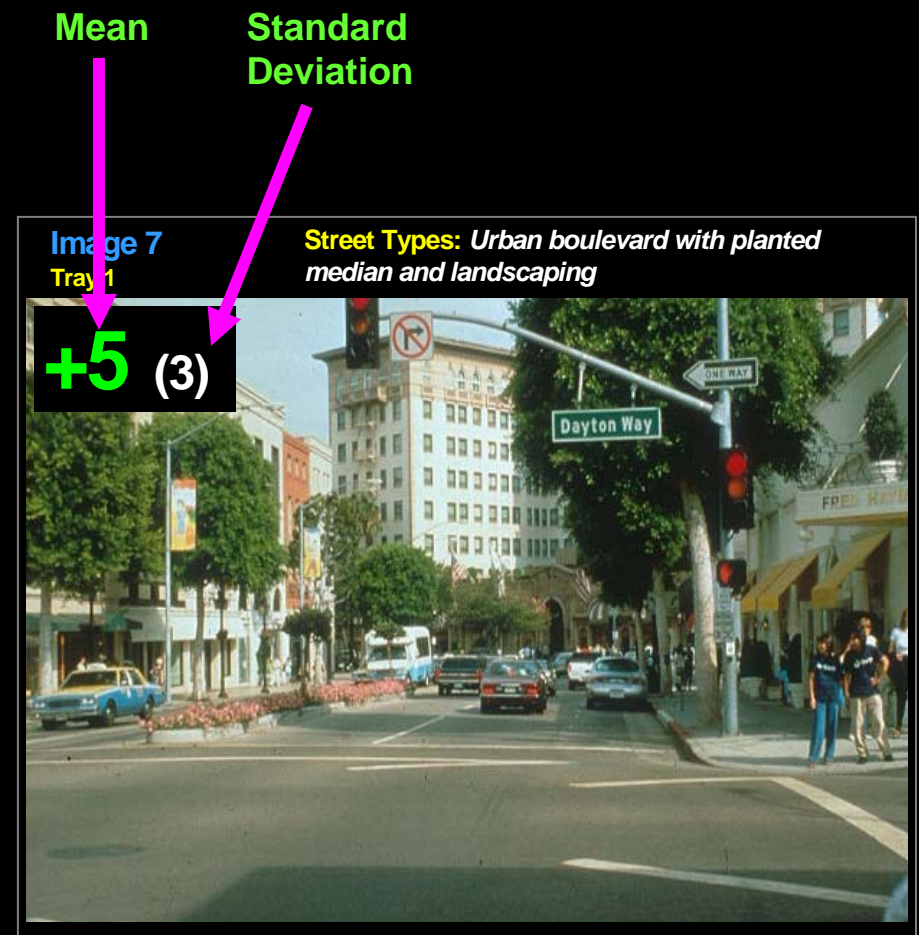
Images are analyzed using two statistical values, the *mean* and the *standard deviation*. The mean tells whether the image is perceived as good or bad by all participants, while standard deviation indicates how closely people agree.

The mean, the average value given to an image, is determined by adding all the image values and dividing the total by the number of participants.

The standard deviation indicates the range of responses to each value. A standard deviation of 3 indicates that almost 70% of the responses fell between +3 and -3 from the mean. If the mean is +5, the range of the standard deviation would be +2 to +8.

An image with a standard deviation within positive numbers (for example: +2 to +6) has high public acceptance. An image with a standard deviation within negative numbers (for example: -1 to -4) has low public acceptance. A standard deviation between positive and negative numbers (for example: -2 to +3) shows general disagreement between participants.

The lower the standard deviation the greater the agreement between participants.



## *Visioning Mission Statement*

- Finding the quality and functional places people want, at an attractive cost to them,
- at the least cost and impact to the greater community,
- with the largest profit to the developers and land owners...

# Highest Values

**The following group of images have the highest values and represent those types of places, physical form and character that is most desirable and necessary for the Wheaton Area to achieve its potential. It is the implementation of these images that will produce the highest quality of life, generate the greatest wealth creation for owners, businesses and residents in the center and will make the Wheaton Center more competitive in the future.**

**The positive images were used as visual catalysts for the workshop. The value of the positive images informed us what people (the market) wanted, the workshop results inform us as to where these images would be most appropriately applied.**

Image 11

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Safe island in the middle of the street.*

+8 (2)





## Image 8

### Tray 2

**Street Landscaping:** *Mixed use on the ground floor of an existing parking deck.*

**+7 (3)**



simulation

Image 74

Tray 1

**Parks and Plazas:** *New public plaza.*

**+7** (4)



Image 24

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *New retail area designed as a main street, with classic streetscape elements.*

**+6 (3)**





Image 76

Tray 1

**Parks and Green Space: *Small planters***

**+6** (3)



## Image 7

### Tray 2

## **Pedestrian Realm:** *Textured streets and sidewalks with street furniture*

**+6** (3)



# Lowest Scores

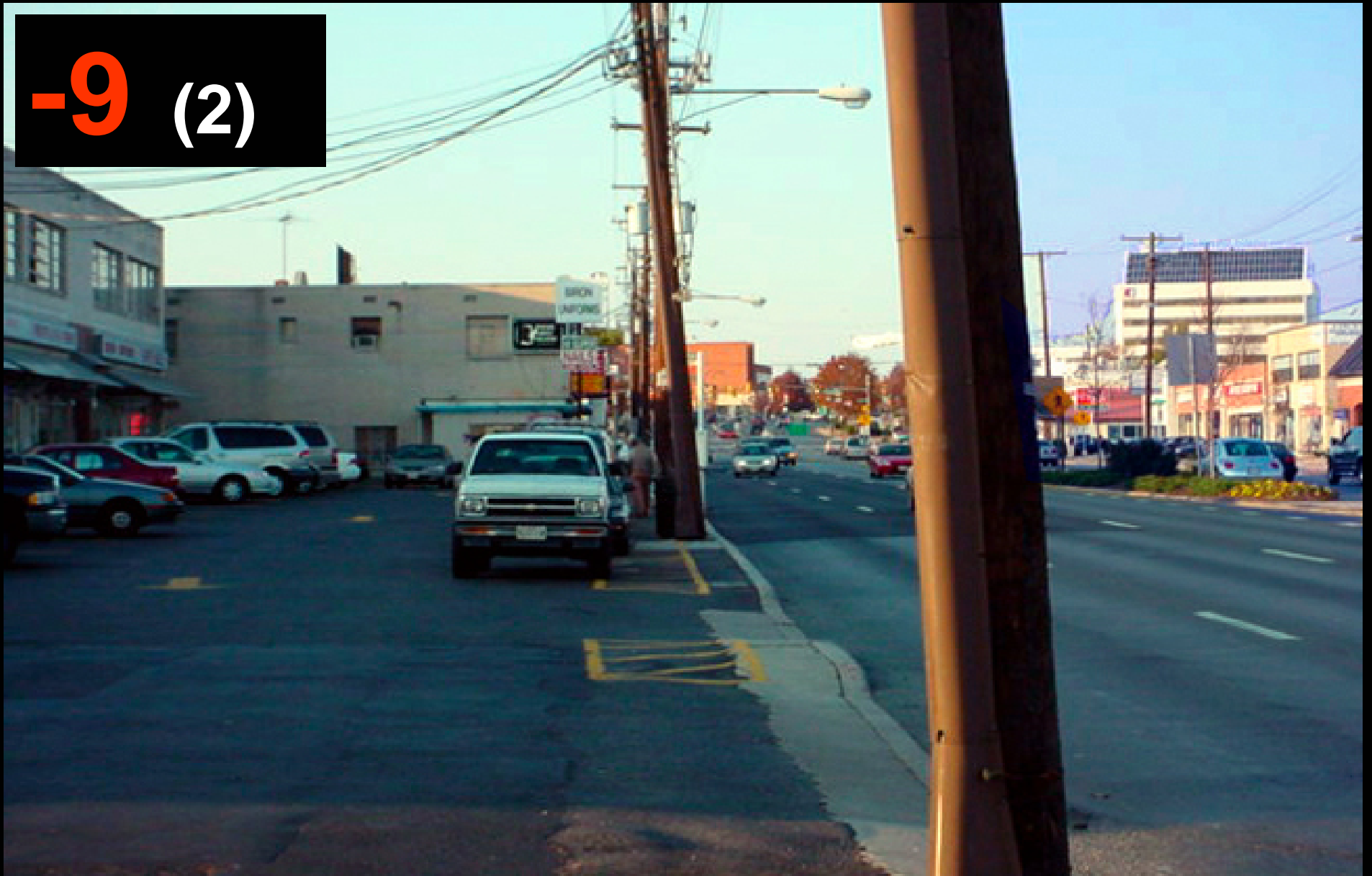
**The following group of images have the lowest values and represent those types of places, physical form and character that is most harmful for the image, market value of the Wheaton Center. To think more optimistically, those locations that were rated negative, when redeveloped will significantly increase in value.**

## Image 6

### Tray 2

## Pedestrian Realm: *Existing walking path*

-9 (2)



**Image 1**

**Tray 1**

**Street Types:** *Georgia Ave. through Wheaton with commercial uses*

**-8 (3)**





**Image 35**  
**Tray 1**

**Building Types:** *New prototype fast food restaurant*

**-8 (3)**





Image 45

Tray 1

## Residential Buildings: *Townhouses*

-8 (3)

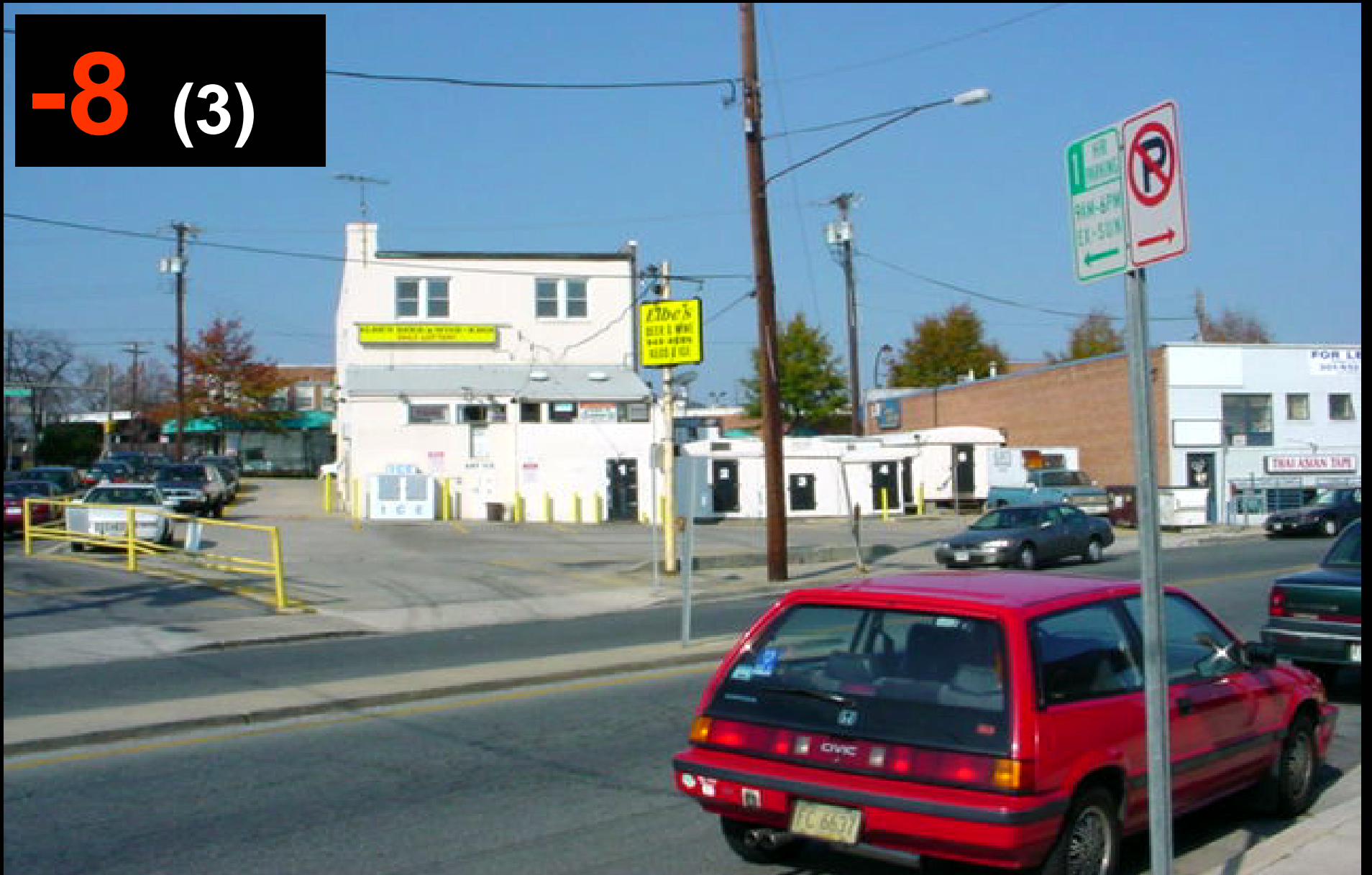


## Image 25

### Tray 1

**Building Types:** *The backs of single use commercial building located in a lot off of the roadway.*

-8 (3)



The following images represent development options for the Wheaton Center divided into 7 categories. Combined the positive values of place in the seven categories a holistic urban vision emerges.

- Street & Arterials
- Development/ Building Types –  
*(Commercial, Mixed-Use & Residential)*
- Parking
- Signage
- Parks & Open Space
- Pedestrian Realm
- Transit

# Streets & Arterials

## Streets, Boulevards, and Highways

Arranged from the lowest to the highest valued

Streets and highways are Wheaton's most important public spaces. People and goods require functional, pleasing and safe paths of travel. Streets and highways are the back bone urban structure. The character and the quality of place is primarily determined from our perceptual experience from the streets and highways.

As the Wheaton area evolves and changes over time, the function and aesthetics of its streets are critical.



**Image 1**

**Tray 1**

**Street Types:** *Georgia Ave. through Wheaton with commercial uses*

**-8 (3)**



## Image 13

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Existing urban boulevard with minimal landscaping*

**-6 (5)**

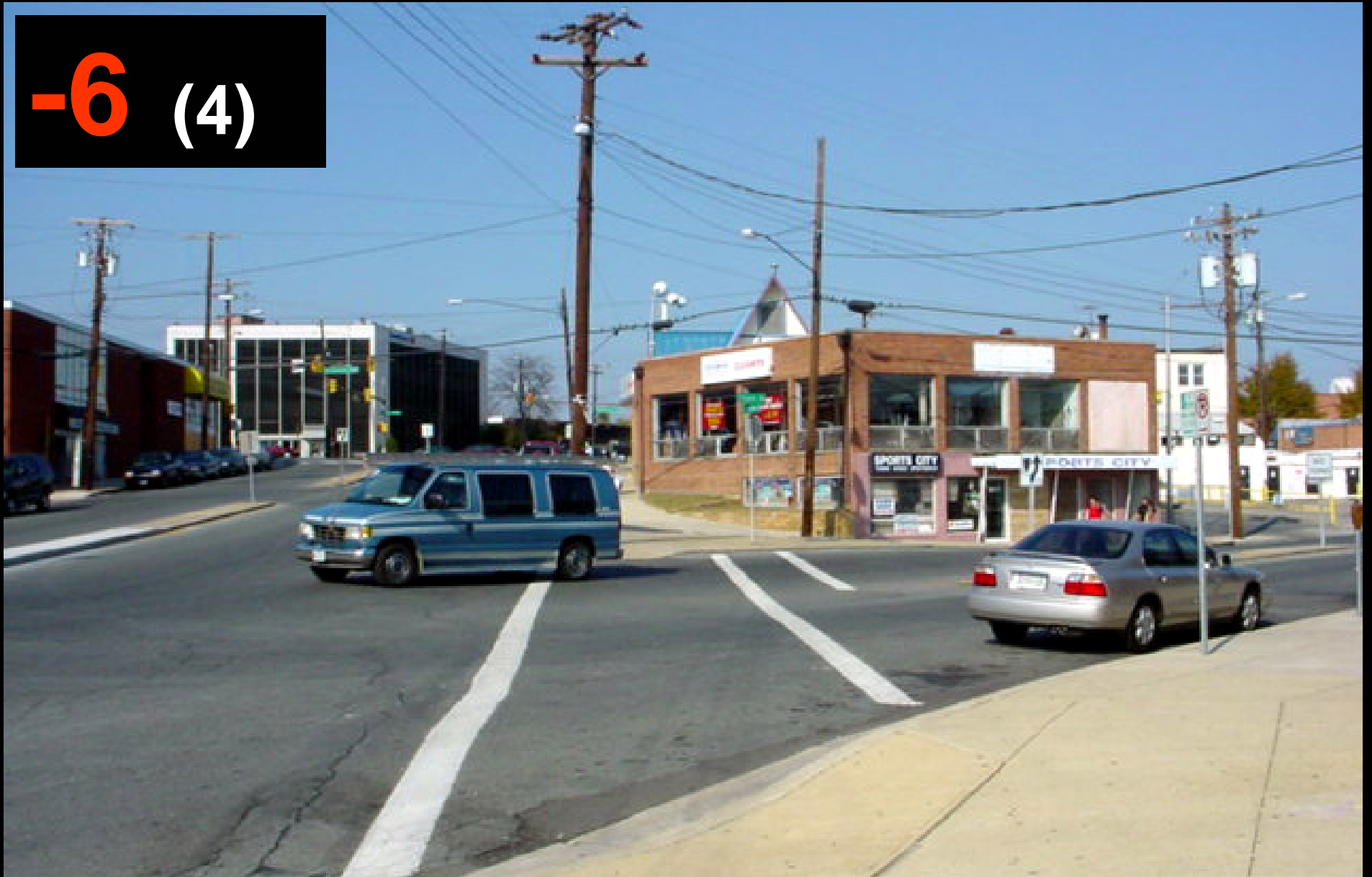


## Image 15

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Existing secondary streets*

**-6 (4)**



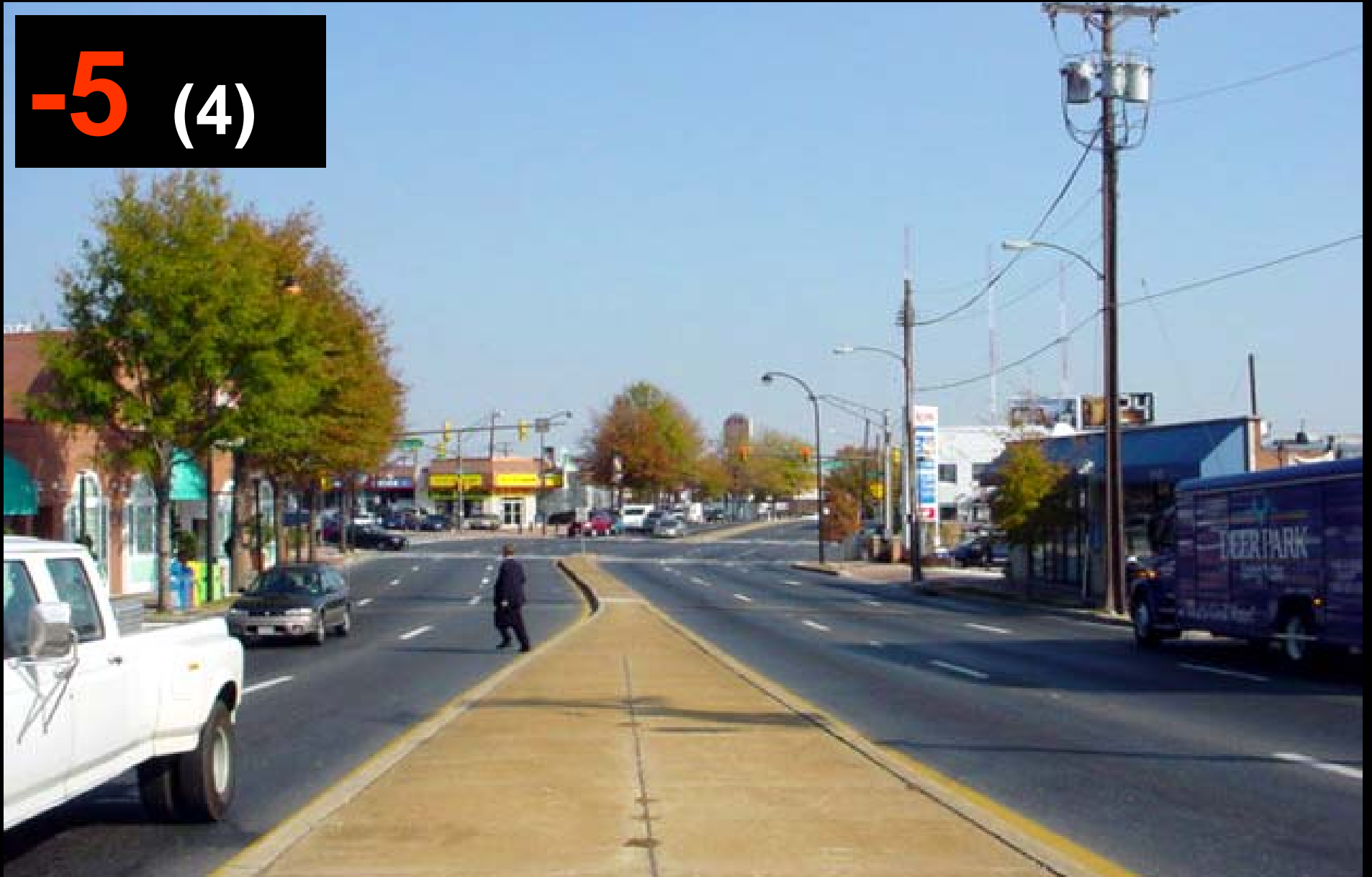


## Image 10

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Arterial with concrete median*

**-5 (4)**



## Image 5

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Major street with entertainment and commercial uses*

-4 (4)

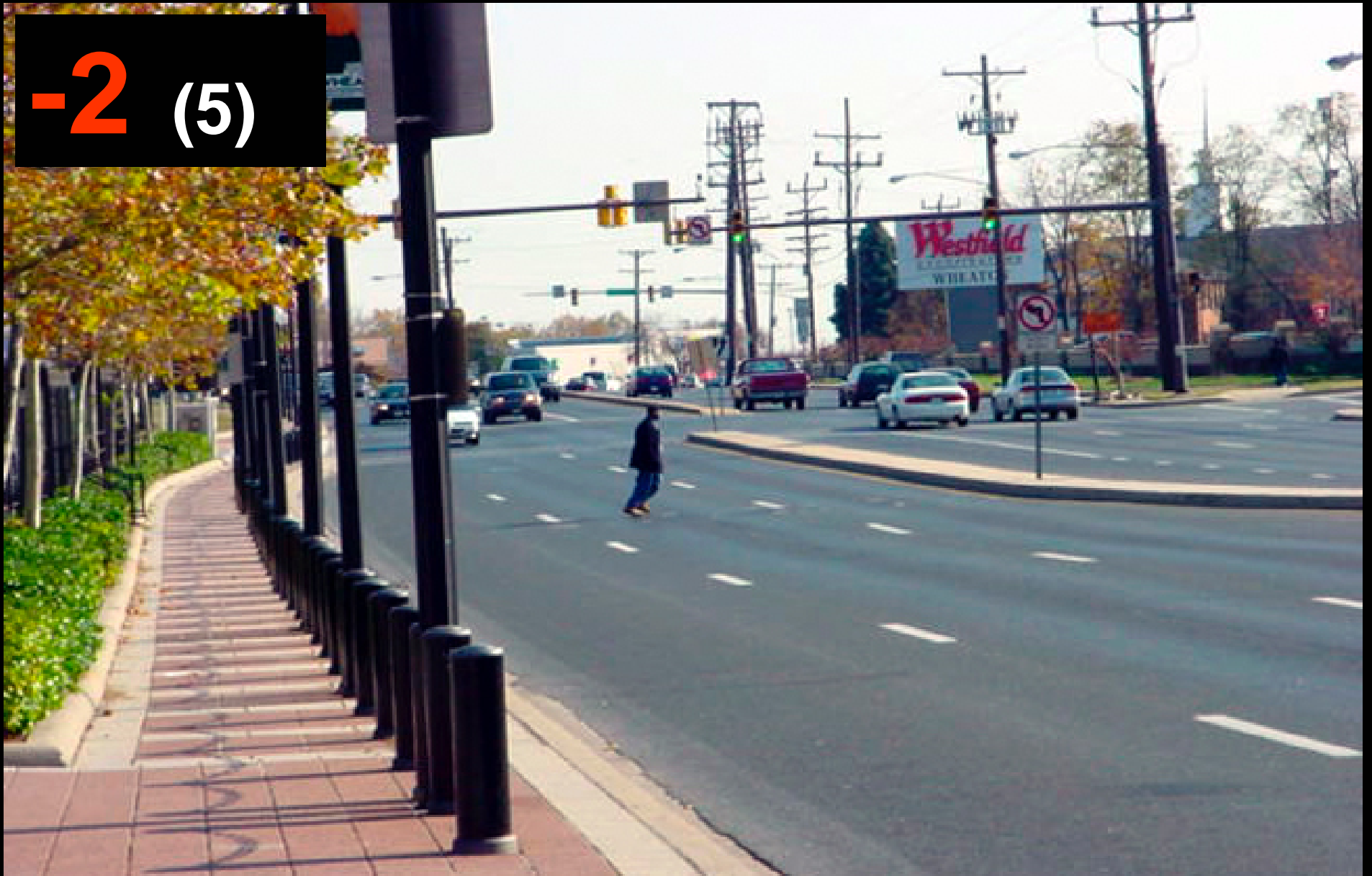


## Image 2

### Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Existing urban boulevard with landscaping*

**-2 (5)**



## Image 17

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Urban arterial with intensive sidewalk activity and parallel parking*

**+1 (5)**



## Image 6

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Viers Mills Road with pedestrian overpass to parking garage*

**+1 (4)**



# **Desired character of the streets**



## Image 4

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Major urban boulevard with new four story retail*

**+2 (5)**



## Image 14

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Existing urban boulevard with intensified mixed-use development*

+2 (4)





## Image 20

Tray 1

+3 (5)

**Street Types:** *Wheaton's major streets could be converted to 4 to 6 lane "urban boulevards" with limited on-street parking during certain times.*



## Image 11

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Residential street in an urban setting, across from green space*

**+3 (4)**



Image 12

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Residential “urban boulevards”*

**+4 (5)**





## Image 3

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Mixed use street with landscaping*

+4 (3)



## Image 8

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Urban Street landscaped with bus way*

**+4 (4)**





## Image 9

### Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Urban super boulevard with mixed uses and planted median and landscaping*

**+4 (4)**



Image 22

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Urban Avenue with landscaping at the edges*

**+4 (4)**





## Image 18

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *A older suburban retail zone transformed into an urban boulevard*

+4 (4)



## Image 16

Tray 1

**Streets:** *Textured mixed-use street in urban core with active sidewalk.*

**+5** (5)





## Image 21

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *New frontage street with two and three story mixed-use buildings*

**+5** (4)





## Image 19

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Urban boulevard with mixed-uses,  
planted median and landscaping*

**+5** (3)



## Image 7

Tray 1

**Street Types:** *Urban boulevard with planted median and landscaping*

**+5 (3)**





## Most acceptable and appropriate character for streets in Wheaton





## Most acceptable and appropriate character for streets in Wheaton





# Simulation (before and after)

## Transformation of the Street Edge

-8



+1



There is a huge increase in value when the edge is transformed from a very negative to a positive place..from car oriented to The low positive value of the image on the right indicate that there are additional characteristics that need to be added to the street to even further increase the value of place.



# Simulation (before and after)

## Transformation of the Street Edge

- 2



+ 2



There is a significant transformation in value when the edge is transformed. There is a significant increase in urban intensity in the mixed use buildings (retail on the ground floor with housing and/or offices above) from negative to a positive place..from car oriented/suburban commercial to urban. Notice the crosswalks and the improved character of the sidewalk.

# Development Options

## Building Types

Arranged from the lowest to the highest valued

- There are many buildings and building types that are appropriate for redevelopment in the downtown area of Wheaton.

# Building Types:

## Commercial

Image 23

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *Existing retail setback from street*

-6 (4)

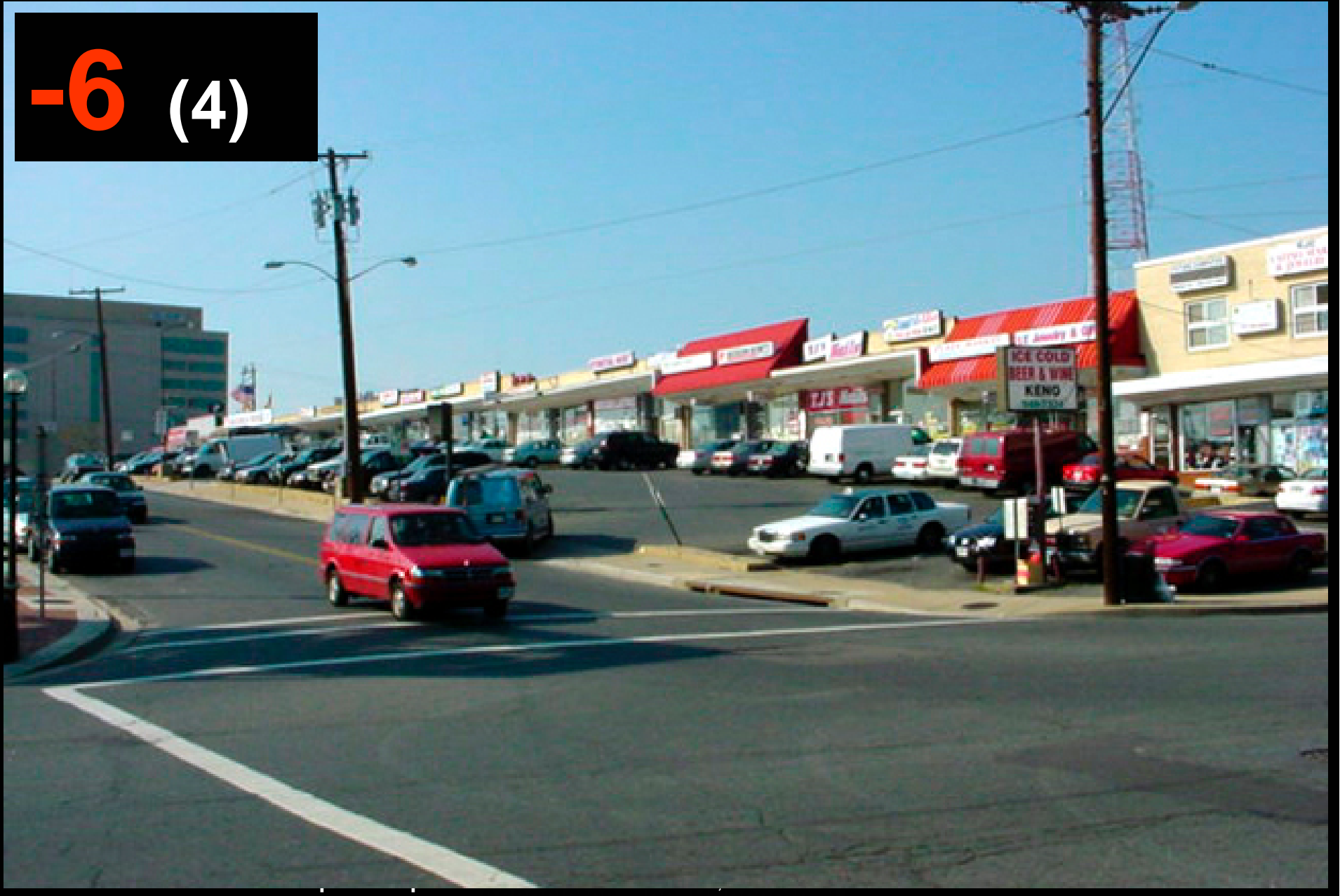




Image 24

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *New retail area designed as a main street, with classic streetscape elements.*

+6 (3)





## Image 25

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *The backs of single use commercial building located in a lot off of the roadway.*

-8 (3)

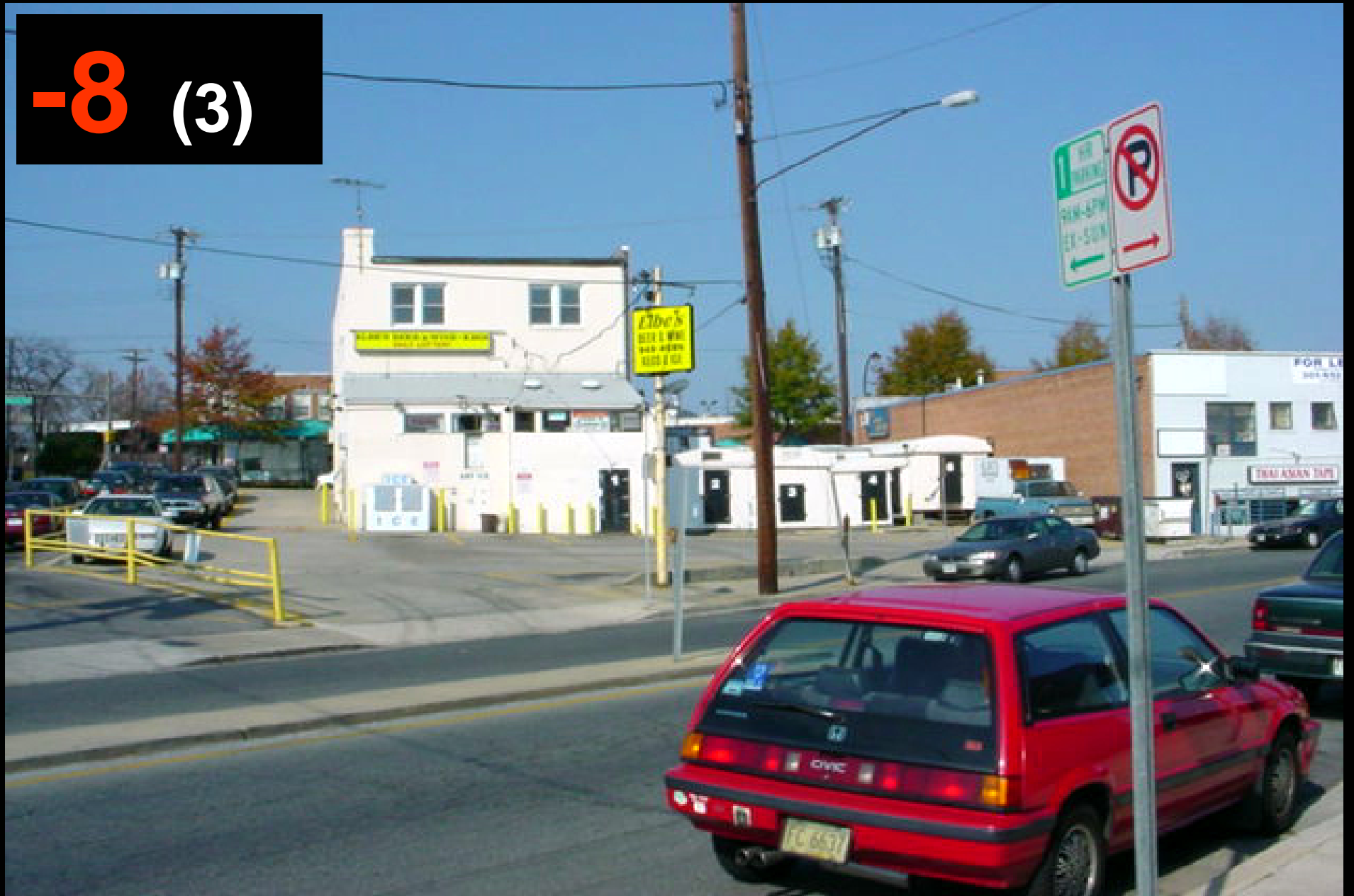


Image 26

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *Four story retail with street display windows*

**+5** (4)



Image 27

Tray 1

**+5** (4)

**Building Types:** *Office building*





## Image 28

Tray 1

-1 (6)

**Building Types:** 14 story office  
*building*



Image 29

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *New modern office building.*

-3 (5)





Image 30

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *Six story office buildings*

**+5** (4)



## Image 31

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *New retail area in a “main street” design, with classic streetscape elements.*

**+5** (3)





Image 32

Tray 1

-3 (6)

**Building Types:** *Multi story hotel*



## Image 33

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *Existing back/front of retail buildings*

-7 (4)





Image 34

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *Open market on a mixed use street.*

**+3** (6)



Image 35

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *New prototype fast food restaurant*

-8 (3)



# Building Types:

## Mixed-use

A mixed-use building contains more than one use in the building. This could be any combination of uses. For example, ground floor retail with housing, offices, and/or parking above.

Image 36

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *Existing older mixed-use corner building in Wheaton.*

-1 (5)





## Image 37

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *Mixed-use buildings in an urban setting, fronting on an urban street.*

+3 (5)



## Image 38

Tray 1

**+1 (5)**

**Building Types:** *A mid-rise office building with retail on the ground floor might be appropriate in the Wheaton CBD.*



**Image 39**

**Tray 1**

**Building Types:** *8 story buildings with retail below and housing and offices above*

**+5 (5)**



Image 40

Tray 1

**Residential Buildings:** *High end apartments with retail on the ground floor.*

**+1 (5)**





**Image 41**

**Tray 1**

**Building Types:** *A mixed-use building with ground floor retail and housing above.*

**+1 (4)**



Image 42

Tray 1

**Building types:** *Mixed use with building with retail on the ground floor and parking above.*

+4 (4)



**Image 43**

**Tray 1**

**Building Types:** *Four and five story mixed-use with retail on the ground floor and offices above*

**+6 (4)**



# Building Types

## Residential Options

**The Wheaton area contains a range of housing types.**

**Housing in good neighborhoods or as a component in mixed use buildings could be an important land use component for future development and redevelopment.**



Image 44

Tray 1

**Residential Buildings:** *New single family attached housing with semi-public edge, set back from the street. Access to the rear garage from side lane.*

+4 (4)



Image 45

Tray 1

## Residential Buildings: *Townhouses*

-8 (3)



Image 46

Tray 1

**Residential Buildings:** *New townhouses with parking in the rear off an alley*

**+5** (4)





**Image 47**

**Tray 1**

**Residential Buildings:** *Existing apartment buildings in Wheaton.*

**-1 (4)**





Image 48

Tray 1

**Building Types:** New courtyard apartments

**+6** (3)



Image 49

Tray 1

**Residential Apartment:** *Three story apartments.*

**+5** (3)



Image 50

Tray 1

**Residential Buildings:** *New apartment flats*

**+2** (4)





**Image 51**  
**Tray 1**

**Residential Buildings:** *Existing townhouses in Wheaton.*

**+2 (4)**





Image 52

Tray 1

## Residential Buildings: Townhouses

+5 (3)



**Image 53**

**Tray 1**

**Residential Buildings:** Five story apartment buildings

**+2 (5)**





Image 54

Tray 1

**Residential Buildings:** *Apartment buildings  
with access off a court*

**+3** (3)



**Image 55**

**Tray 1**

**Residential Buildings:** *New four story  
apartment buildings*

**+3 (4)**





Image 56

Tray 1

**Building Types:** *Residential Apartments*

**-2 (5)**



# Parking

**Parking is a necessity.**

**Large surface parking lots utilize a large amount of open space. Finding alternative locations and designs for large on-grade surface lots presents a challenge in a car-oriented environment.**

Image 57

Tray 1

**Parking Options** *Existing surface lot in the front  
of retail*

-4 (4)



Image 58

Tray 1

**Parking Options:** *Existing parking structure.*

**-2 (4)**





**Image 59**

**Tray 1**

**Parking Options:** *A hedge 3 to 4 feet high along the front edge of a parking lot facing a street.*

**+2 (4)**



Image 60

Tray 1

**Parking Options:** *Existing MTA parking structure.*

**-3** (5)





Image 61

Tray 1

Parking Options: *Existing surface parking*

-7 (4)



Image 62

Tray 1

**Parking Options:** *Existing parking in front of retail uses*

**-8 (3)**





Image 63

Tray 1

Parking Options: *Parallel parking.*

+2 (5)

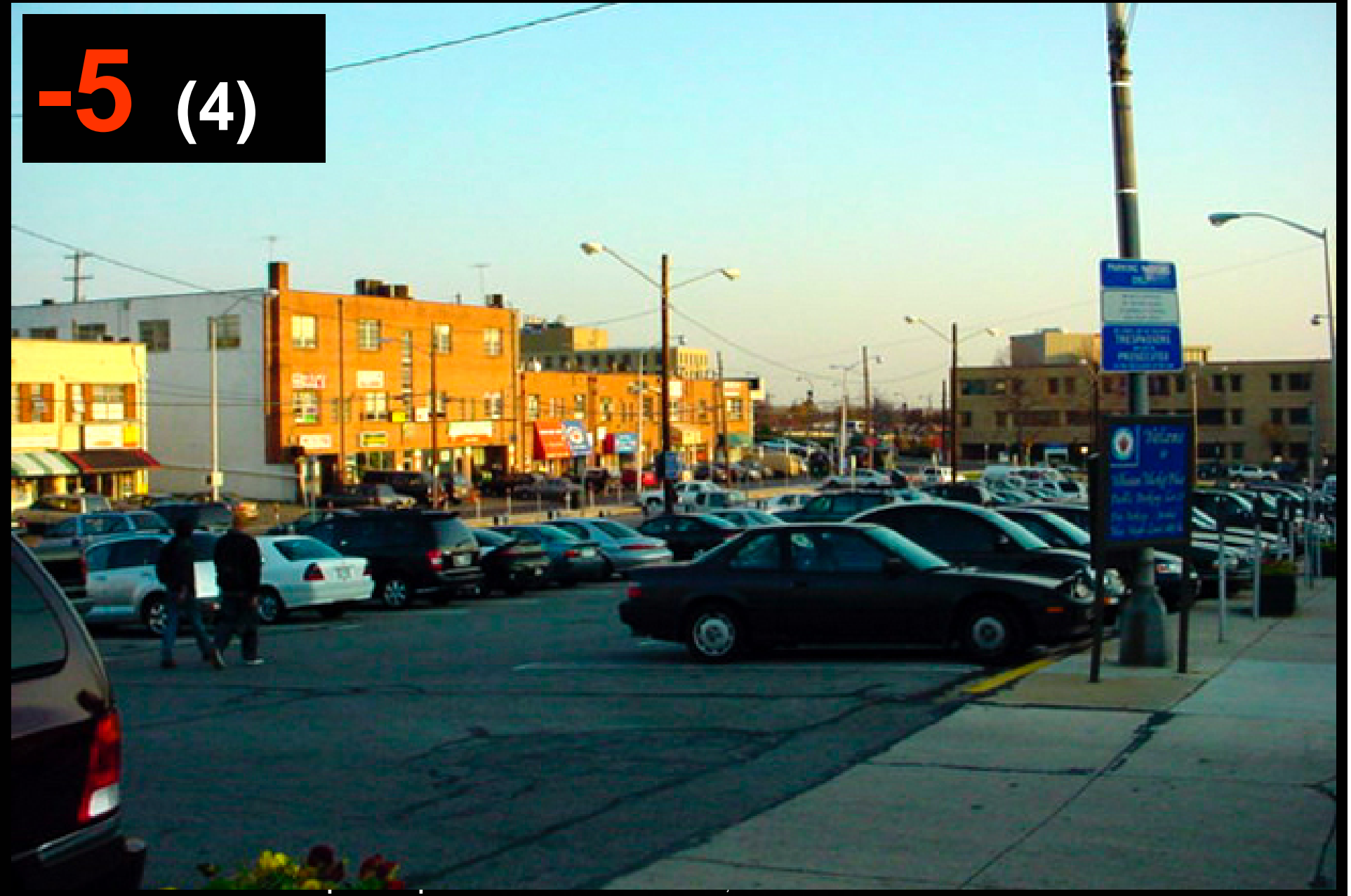


Image 64

Tray 1

**Parking:** *Existing public parking lot*

**-5** (4)



# Signage

## Image 65

Tray 1

**Signage Options:** *Existing signage in a commercial strip fronting on a major road.*

**-5 (4)**





Image 66

Tray 1

**Signage Options:** *Existing decorative banner  
signage along major road.*

+4 (3)



Image 67

Tray 1

**Signage Options:** *Existing retail signage.*

**-2 (5)**



Image 68

Tray 1

**Signage Options:** *Existing “gateway” signage.*

**-2 (5)**



Image 69

Tray 1

**Signage Options:** *Commercial sign integrated into building design.*

-4 (5)





Image 70

Tray 1

**Signage Options:** *Gas station sign located in a retail commercial area.*

**+3** (4)



## Image 71

Tray 1

**+5** (3)

**Signage Options:** *Smaller hanging signs and signs on awnings*



# Parks, Plazas & Green Space

Open spaces like parks and plazas are equally important, if not critical, as an area becomes more built up. Healthy parks contribute to a sense of community. They are places for people to socialize, relax, and exercise, as well as providing a habitat for wildlife.

Image 72

Tray 1

**Parks and Green Space:** *Median landscaped  
with trees and flowers*

**+6** (3)





Image 73

Tray 1

**Parks and Plaza:** *Urban park.*

**+5** (4)



Image 74

Tray 1

**Parks and Plazas:** *New public plaza.*

**+7** (4)



Image 75

Tray 1

Parks and Green Space: *Urban Plaza.*

+4 (5)



Image 76

Tray 1

**Parks and Green Space: *Small planters***

**+6** (3)





**Image 77**

**Tray 1**

**Parks and Plaza:** *Parking lot transformed to an urban plaza - parking below ground*

**+4 (5)**



Image 78

Tray 1

**Parks and Plazas:** *Urban Plaza with steps and flower display*

**+6** (4)



Image 79

Tray 1

**Parks and Plazas:** *Ice skating rink.*

**+4** (4)



Image 80

Tray 1

**Parks and Plazas:** *Urban plaza with fountain.*

+2 (4)





Image 1

Tray 2

**Parks and green Space:** *Small park incorporated into traffic islands*

+4 (4)

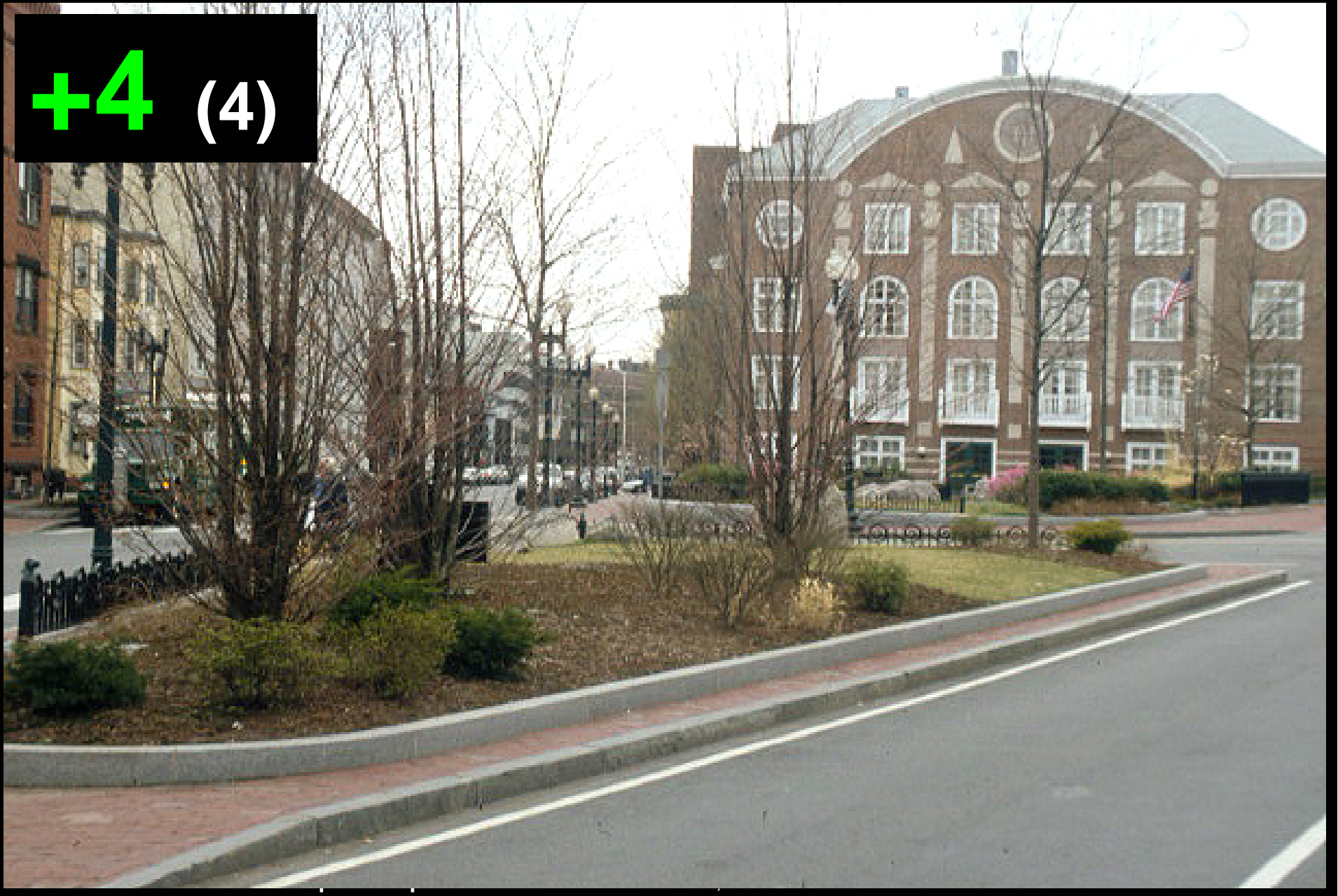


Image 2

Tray 2

**Parks and Open Space:** *Plaza integrated into office courtyard.*

**+2** (4)



# Pedestrian Realm

The pedestrian realm defines the pedestrian experience. Aspects of the pedestrian realm include the condition, width and material of sidewalks, appropriateness of street furniture, landscaping and building conditions, and the perceived safety and protection of the pedestrian experience, among others.

Image 3

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Existing sidewalk.*

**-5** (4)

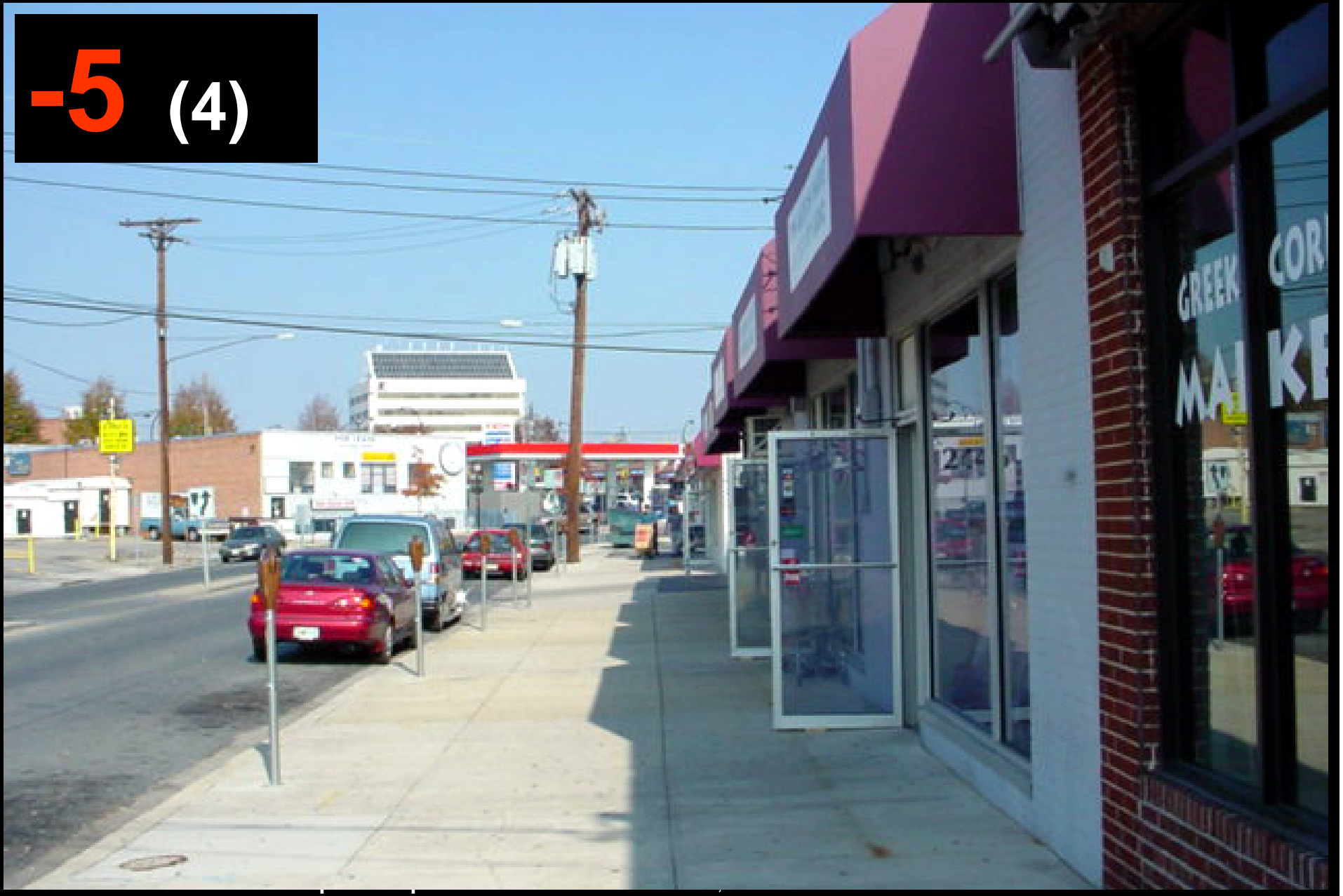


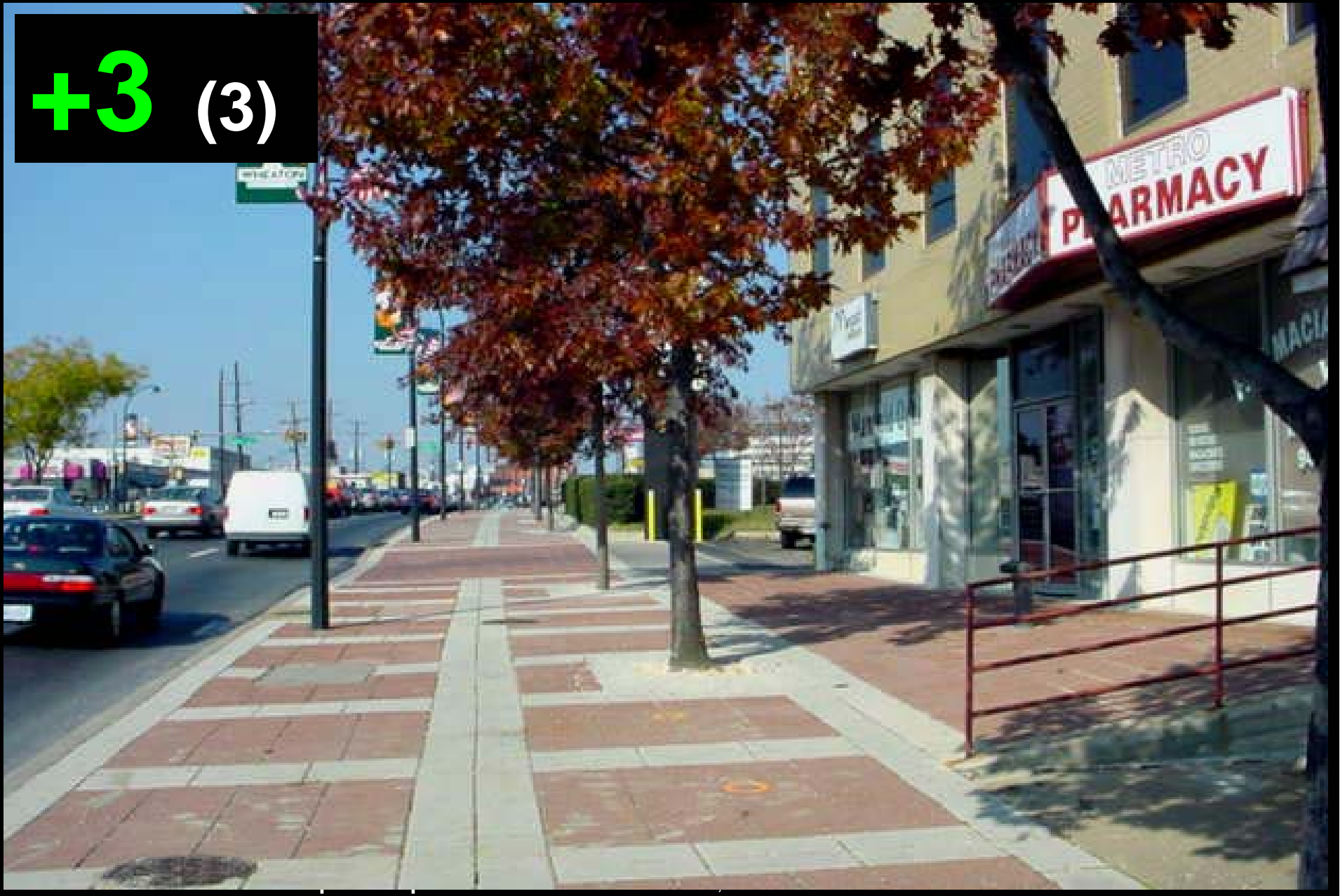


Image 4

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Existing sidewalk fronting major road through Wheaton.*

+3 (3)



**Image 5**

**Tray 2**

**Street Landscaping:** *Trees and landscaping used to obscure existing parking deck.*

**+1 (3)**





## Image 6

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Existing walking path*

**-9** (2)



Image 7

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Textured streets and sidewalks with street furniture*

**+6** (3)





Image 8

Tray 2

**Street Landscaping:** *Mixed use on the ground floor of an existing parking deck.*

+7 (3)

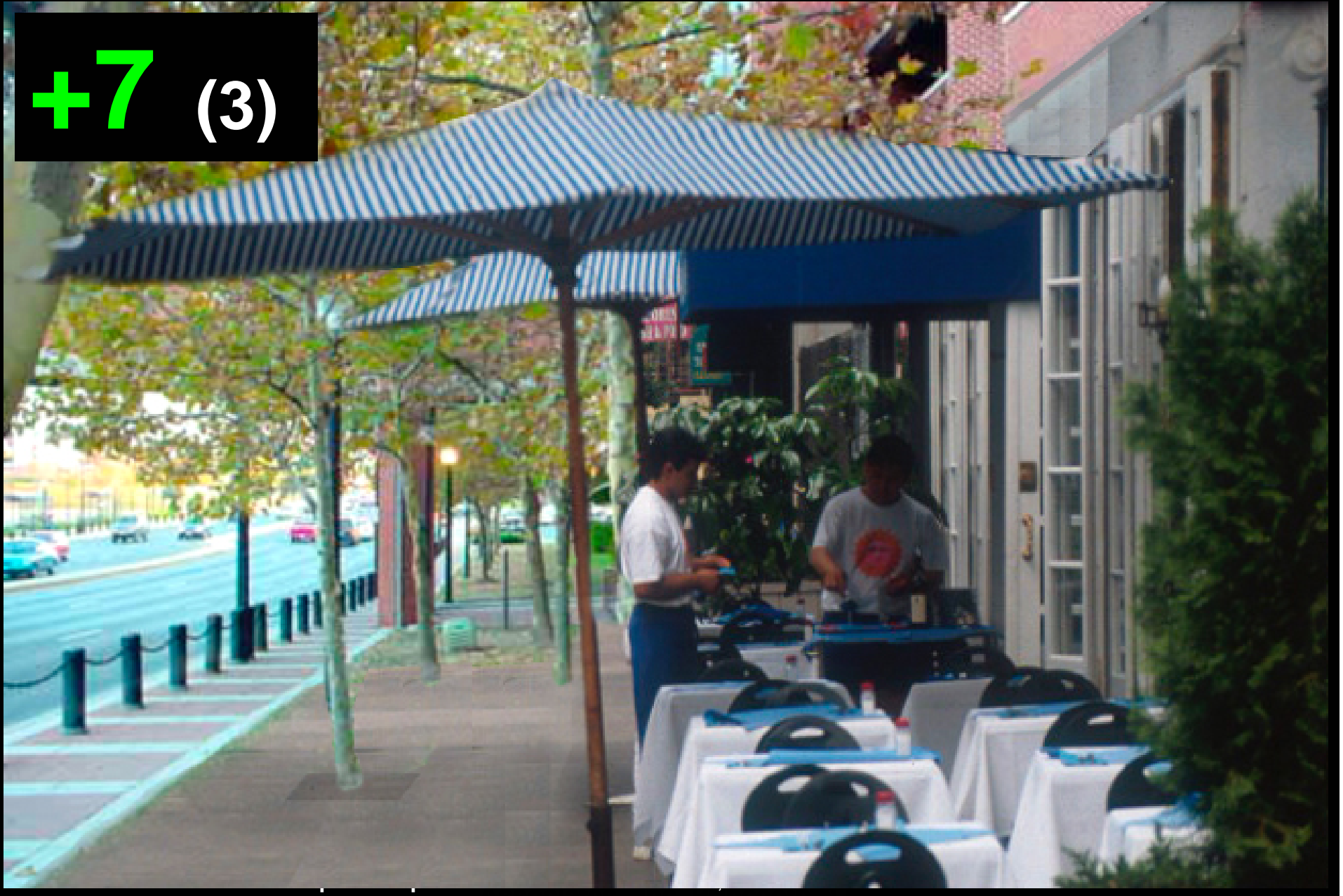


Image 9

Tray 2

**Street Types:** *Certain streets could be primarily pedestrian.*

+5 (5)



Image 10

Tray 2

**Street Landscaping:** *Decorative street furniture along with textures sidewalks and landscaping.*

+4 (4)

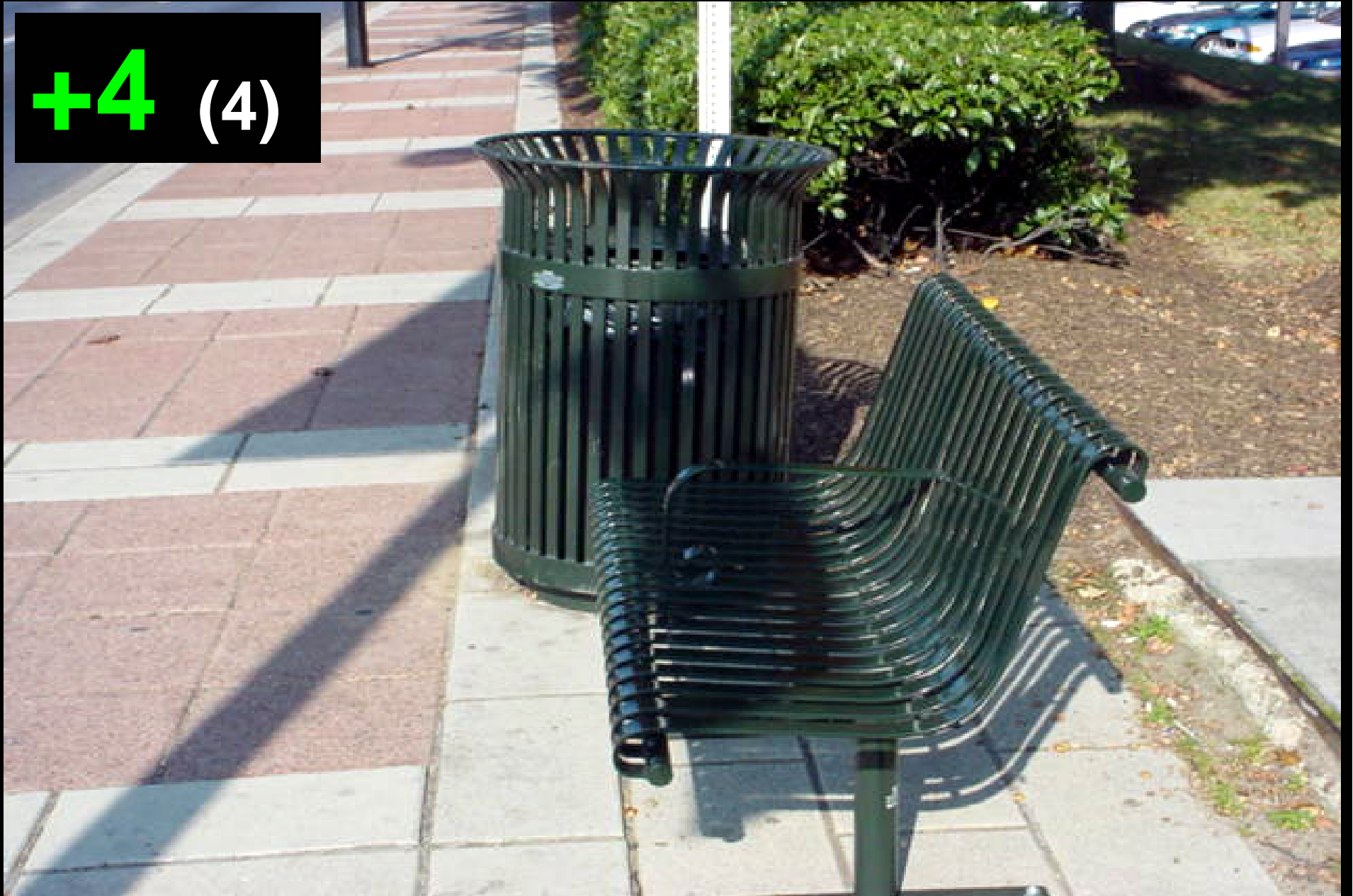


Image 11

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Safe island in the middle of the street.*

+8 (2)





Image 12

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Existing pedestrian sidewalk along commercial strip.*

-6 (3)



Image 13

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Un-safe island in the middle of the street.*

-8 (2)



Image 14

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Pedestrians crossing a street without a crosswalk.*

-7 (3)

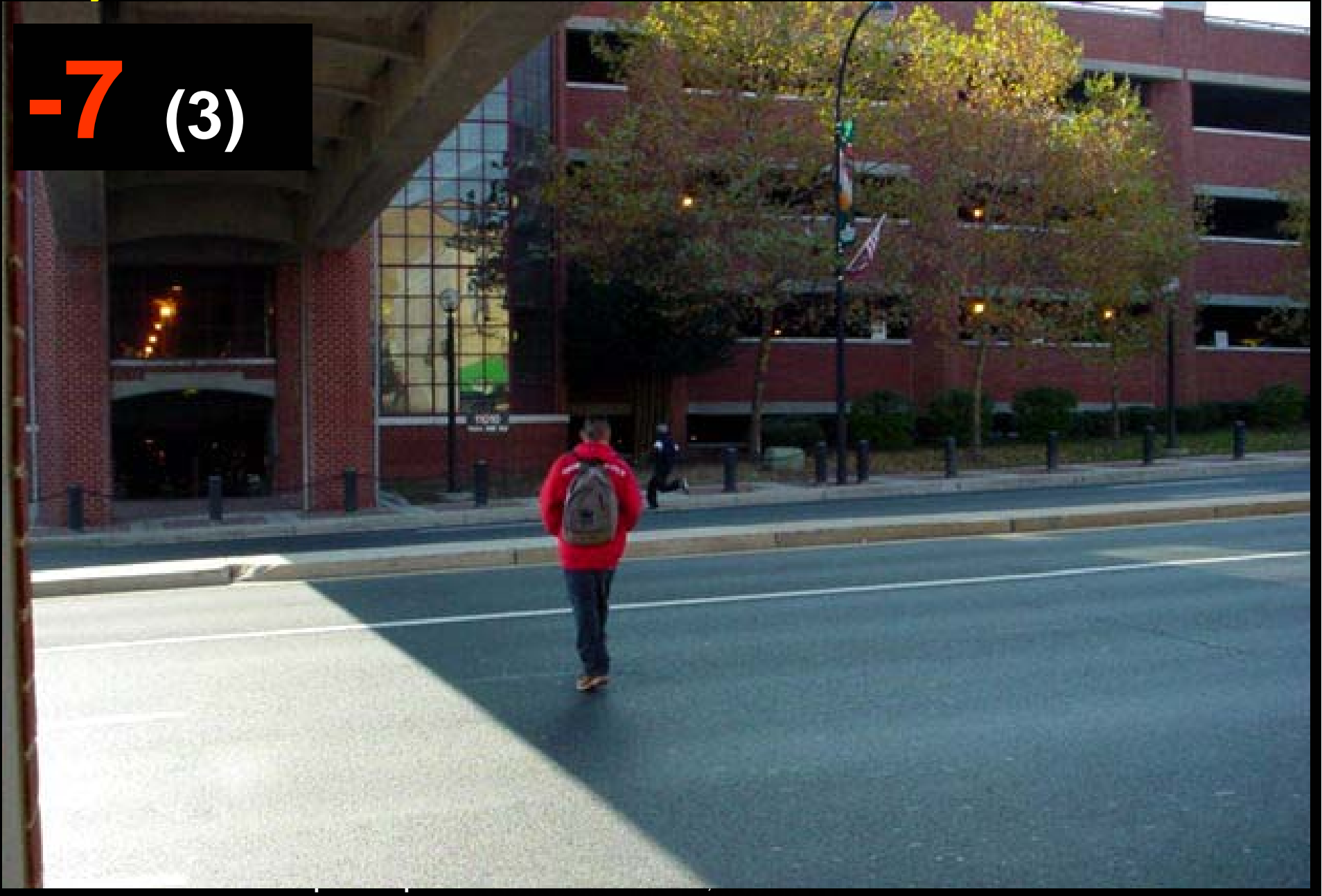


Image 15

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Urban street with corner cafe*

**+5** (4)





Image 16

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Existing pedestrian conditions along Wheaton street.*

-6 (4)



Image 17

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Sidewalks in front of urban residential (town houses)*

+6 (3)



Image 18

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Existing sidewalk along major roadway through Wheaton.*

-7 (3)

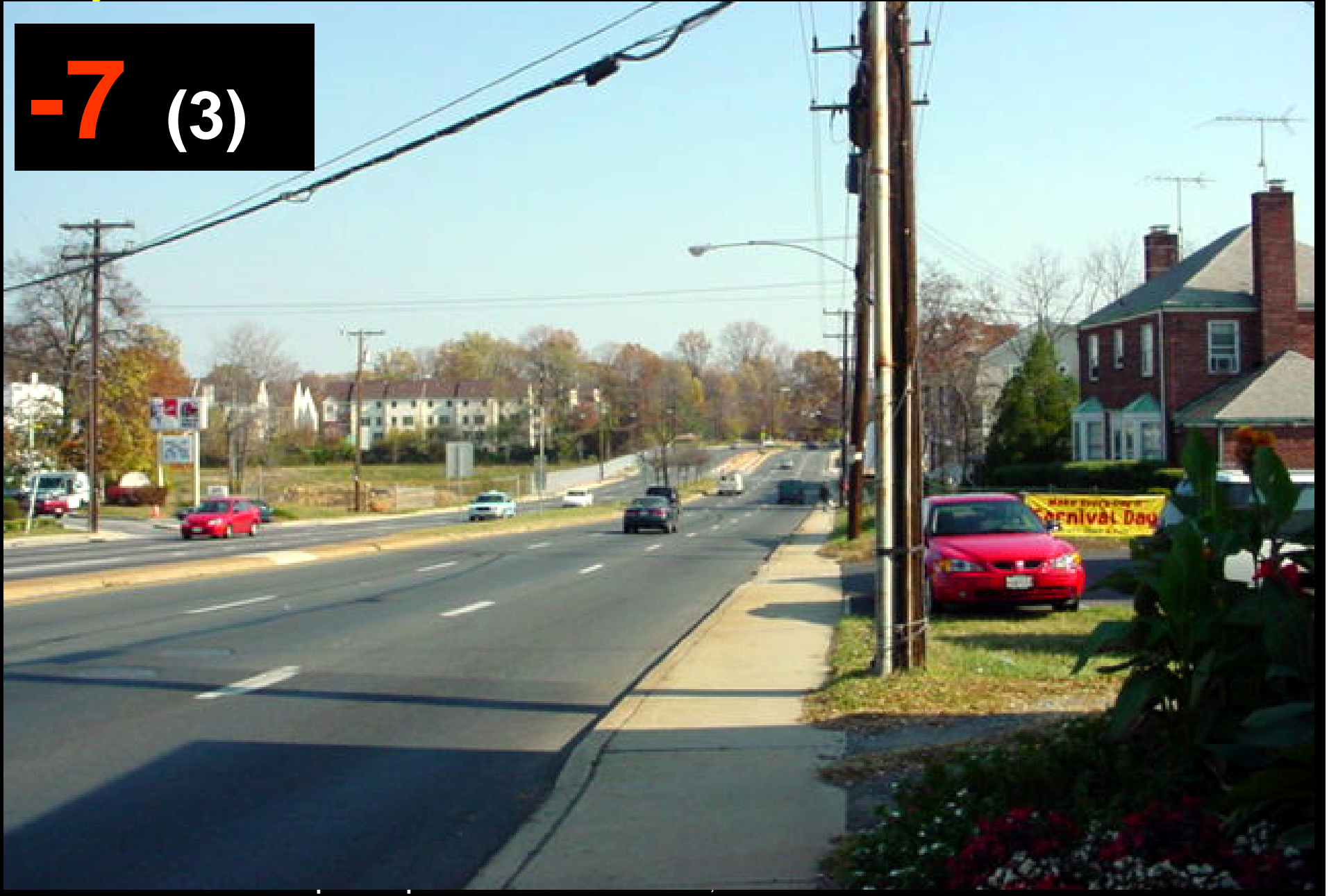


Image 19

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm: Active urban sidewalk**

**+5 (3)**





Image 20

**Pedestrian Realm: Existing.**

Tray 2

**+6 (3)**

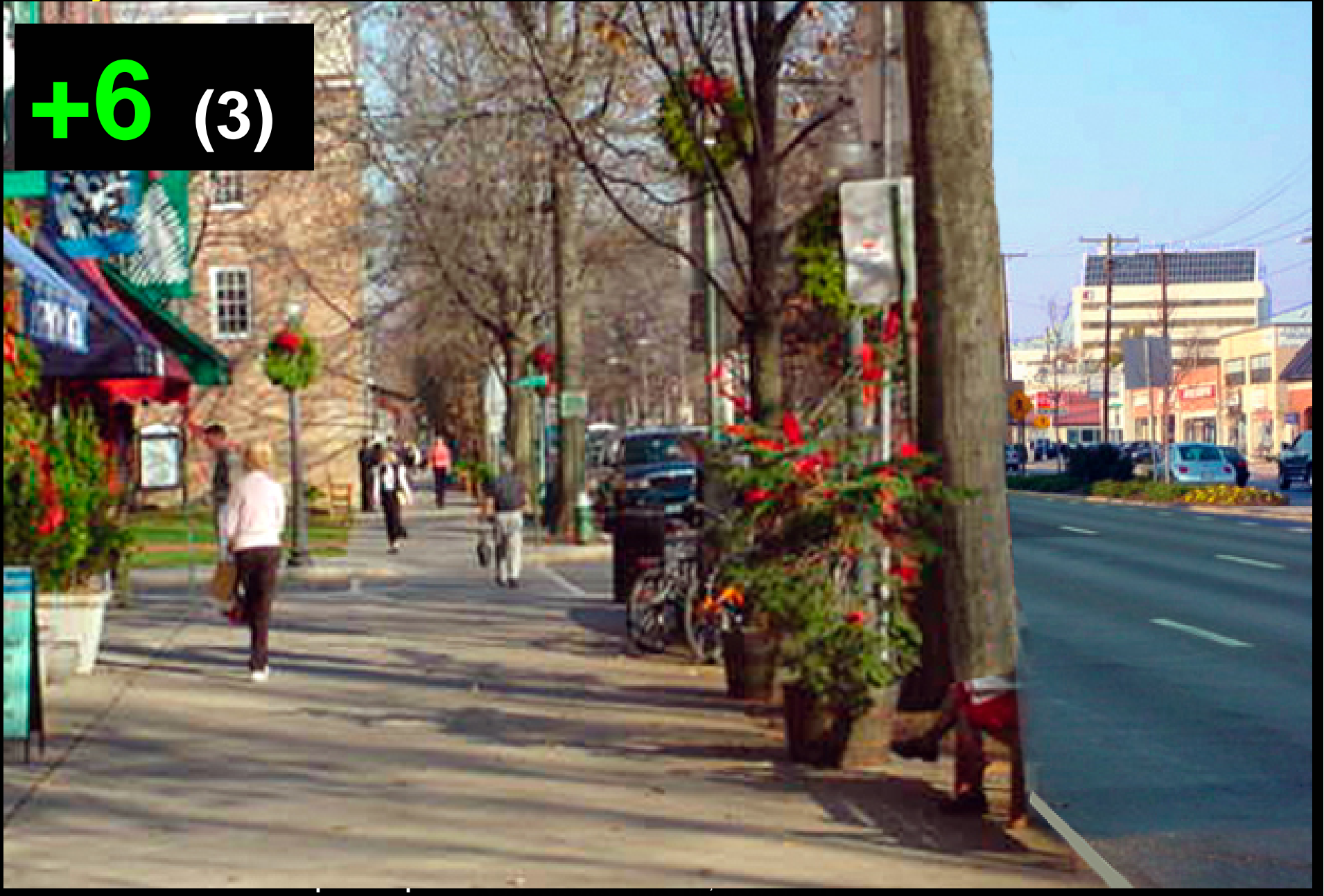


Image 21

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Urban sidewalk with a fence as a semi-public edge, street trees and lighting.*

+5 (4)



Image 22

Tray 1

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Double rows of trees*

**+5** (3)



Image 23

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Existing after streetscape improvements.*

-2 (4)





Image 24

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm: Existing.**

**-6 (4)**

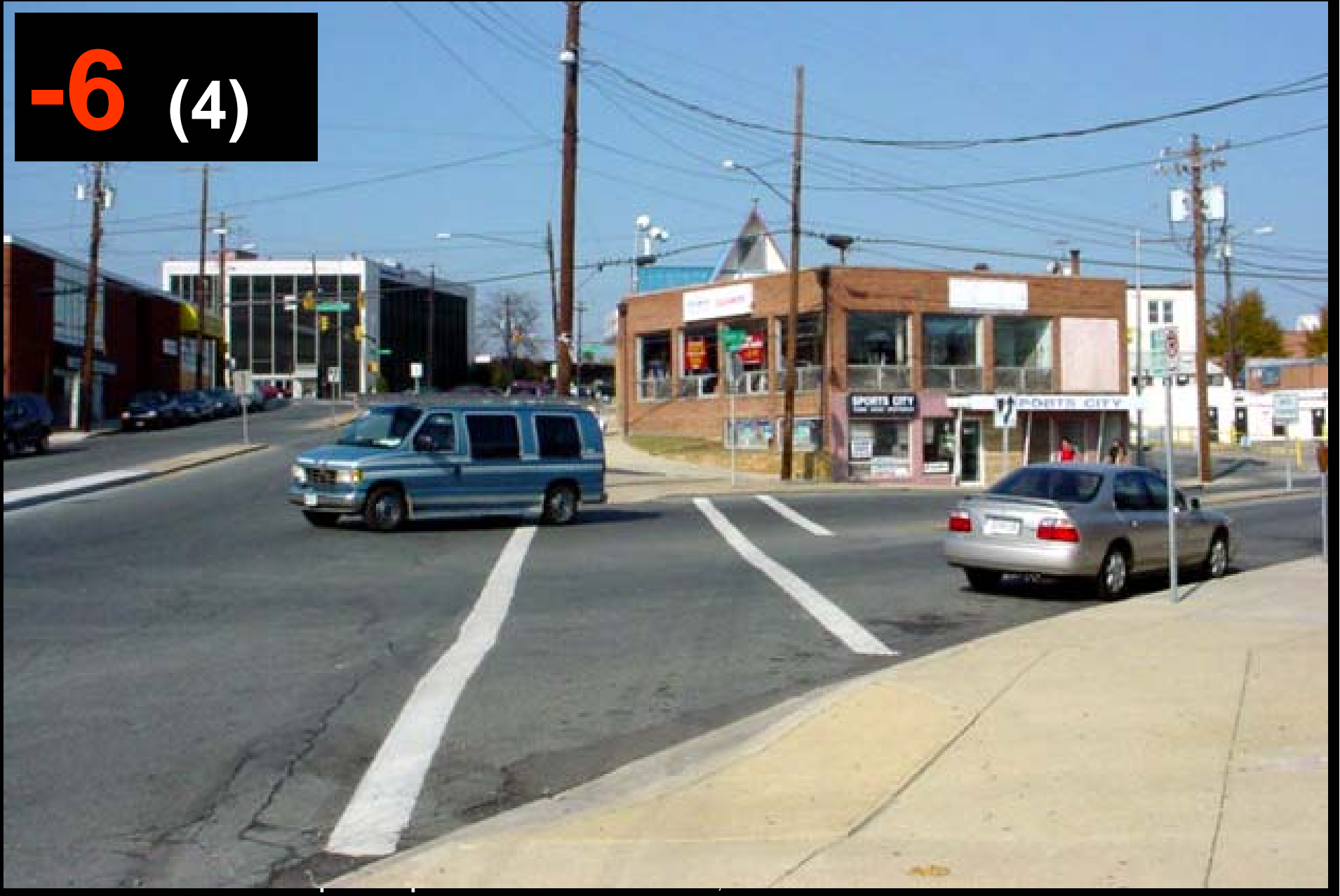


Image 25

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Crosswalk with brick texture and bollards for added pedestrian safety.*

**+5** (3)

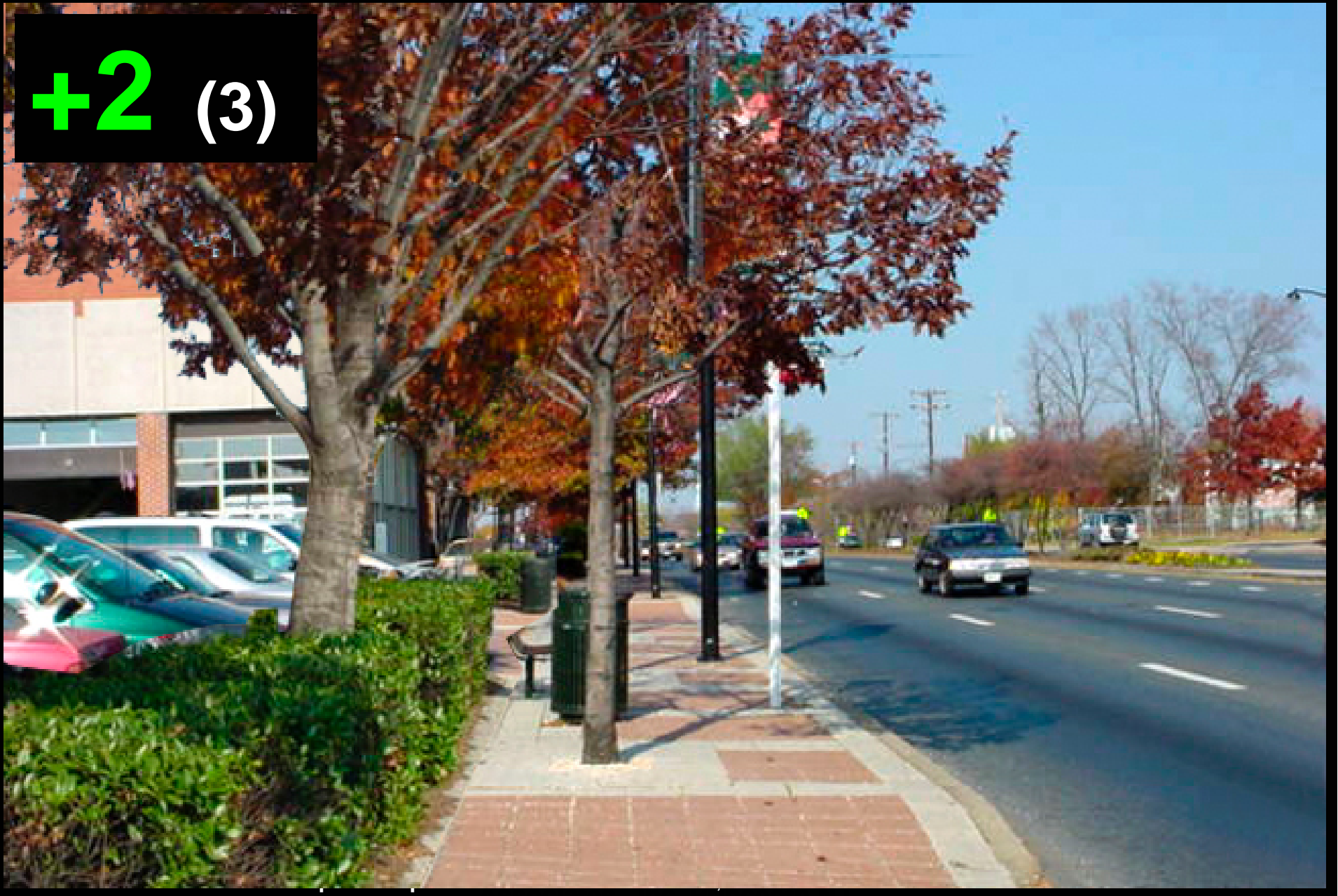


Image 26

Tray 2

**Pedestrian Realm:** *Existing sidewalk with texturing and landscaping screening parking.*

+2 (3)



# Transit

**The Wheaton study area currently has multi-modal transit options available to residents and the public at large while it still remains largely car dependent.**

**Transit could play a more significant role in the future to development and redevelopment in the area.**

**Transit must continue to be multi-modal to be successful. Engaging a range of modes that work together is the ideal solution. Positive pedestrian realms, bicycles, attractive and safe stops, appropriate vehicle types and frequent service are necessary for transit to work.**



Image 27

Tray 2

+1 (4)

**Transit:** *Existing bus stop*



Image 28

**Transit:** *Existing Metro station bus stops*

Tray 2

-1 (4)



**Image 29**

**Tray 2**

**Transit:** *Existing bus service with links to Metro station*

**+1 (3)**



Image 30

**Transit:** *Existing Metro station in Wheaton.*

Tray 2

**+1 (4)**





**Image 31**

**Tray 2**

**Transit Options:** *Small shuttle bus for more localized transit service.*

**+4 (4)**



Image 32

Tray 2

**Transit Options:** *Potential bus shelter that could be used in Wheaton.*

**+3 (5)**



# Simulations



















